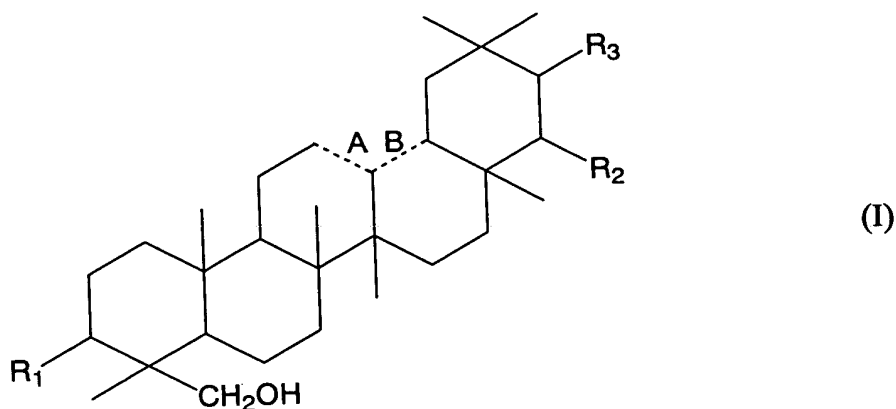


CLAIMS

1. A compound represented by the following general formula (I):



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wherein of the bond lines indicated by dotted lines, when A is a double bond and B is a single bond,  $R_1$  is -O-GlcUA-Gal-Glc,  $R_2$  is -O-Ara-2-AcXyl, -O-Ara-3-AcXyl, -O-Ara-4-AcXyl, -O-Ara-2,3-diAcXyl, -O-Ara-2,4-diAcXyl, -O-Ara-3,4-diAcXyl or -O-Ara-3,4,6-triAcGlc, and  $R_3$  is -OH; alternatively, when A is a single bond and B is a double bond,  $R_1$  is -OH,  $R_2$  is -OH and  $R_3$  is -H, wherein GlcUA is glucuronic acid residue, Gal is galactose residue, Glc is glucose residue, Ara is arabinose residue, AcXyl is acetylated xylose residue, AcGlc is acetylated glucose residue,

or a salt thereof.

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2. A therapeutic agent or prophylactic agent, characterized in that the therapeutic agent or prophylactic agent comprises as an effective ingredient the compound as defined in claim 1 and/or a pharmacologically acceptable salt

thereof, wherein the agent is for a disease showing sensitivity to the above compound.

3. An enhancing agent for nerve growth factor production, characterized in that the enhancing agent comprises as an effective ingredient the compound as defined in claim 1 and/or a salt thereof.

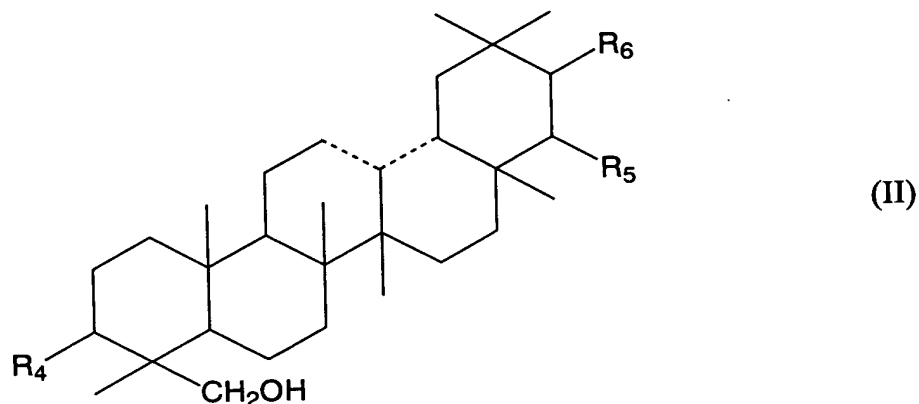
4. A food, beverage or feed, characterized in that the food, beverage or feed comprises as an effective ingredient the compound as defined in claim 1 and/or a salt thereof.

5. The food, beverage or feed according to claim 4, wherein the food, beverage or feed is a food, beverage or feed used for enhancing nerve growth factor production.

6. A therapeutic agent or prophylactic agent for a disease requiring enhancement of nerve growth factor production upon treatment or prevention, characterized in that the therapeutic agent or prophylactic agent comprises as an effective ingredient a compound selected from the group consisting of soyasaponin compounds, soyasapogenin compounds, glycyrrhizin and pharmacologically acceptable salts thereof.

7. The therapeutic agent or prophylactic agent according to claim 6, wherein the soyasaponin compound and the soyasapogenin compound are a soyasaponin compound and a soyasapogenin compound which are represented by the

following general formula (II):



5 wherein the bond lines indicated by dotted lines are a single bond or a double bond; R<sub>4</sub> is -OH or -O-saccharide residue; R<sub>5</sub> is -OH, =O or -O-saccharide residue; and R<sub>6</sub> is -OH or -H.

8. An enhancing agent for nerve growth factor production, characterized in  
10 that the enhancing agent comprises as an effective ingredient a compound selected from the group consisting of soyasaponin compounds, soyasapogenin compounds, glycyrrhizin and salts thereof.

9. The enhancing agent according to claim 8, wherein the soyasaponin  
15 compound and the soyasapogenin compound are a soyasaponin compound and a soyasapogenin compound which are represented by the general formula (II) as defined in claim 7.

10. A food, beverage or feed for enhancing nerve growth factor production,

characterized in that the food, beverage or feed comprises as an effective ingredient a compound selected from the group consisting of soyasaponin compounds, soyasapogenin compounds, glycyrrhizin and salts thereof.

- 5      11.    The food, beverage or feed according to claim 10, wherein the soyasaponin compound and the soyasapogenin compound are a soyasaponin compound and a soyasapogenin compound which are represented by the general formula (II) as defined in claim 7. ✓